

# Brooklyn Jewish Center Review

Rosh Hashanah, 5738

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THE THICK DARKNESS THAT COVERS THE EARTH

By Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal

THE ORIGIN OF THE MEZUZA AND ITS ORNAMENTS

By Rabbi David Haymovitz

THE BEAUTY OF THE PSALMS

By Rabbi Mordecai H. Lewittes

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF JEWISH DIVORCE

By Mr. Joseph Heller

MESSIAHS, TRUE AND FALSE

By Prof. David Rudavsky

THE CHEDER IN THE SHTETL

By Mr. Jacob Hoffman

A SCHOLAR SEEKS A BREAKTHROUGH

By Mr. Louis Kramer

*New Year Greeting Section*

## ***Everything Goes Up...Up...Up...***

These words might be written bottom to top  
Then you'd say that's too cute.  
But what we have to say ought to make you hop  
And react with step acute.

What we buy now  
Cost less yesterday.  
Everything goes up  
With no end in sight

We're in a bind —  
The outgo tops the take  
Friends help to bridge the gap  
Too many remain deaf to our pleas;  
Let others do it, say they.

We need your help —  
You who give  
You who don't  
ALL of YOU must GIVE, NOW!

Everyone must GIVE to the KOL NIDRE APPEAL.

**Don't let the other fellow do it alone!**

ISRAEL H. LEVINthal, Rabbi  
BENJAMIN MARKOWE, President

DAVID HAYMOVITZ, Rabbi  
EMANUEL COHEN, Honorary President

LOUIS KRAMER, Chairman, Kol Nidre Appeal

## A SCHOLAR SEEKS A BREAKTHROUGH

This issue of the Review publishes an article by Joseph Heller that innately is controversial. To say, as we generally do, that we disclaim all responsibility for the writer's viewpoint, would be redundant of our usual disclaimer published in every issue. However, the writer is so persuasive in his plea, that we are hard put not to go along with his opinion.

Our society is in a turbulent state. It is evident in every facet of government and life. Courts, legislatures, leaders, have all altered positions that once had solid standings. Our people have turned the mores of the times into standards hard to accept yet we regard them as the norm, tacitly, if not actively.

Into this maelstrom, comes a man, scholar of the law, and of recent years a student of Mishna, and makes a plea that can't be ignored. He has spent arduous months preparing his paper, writing, revising, submitting it to others with superior knowledge for opinions. What he has to say is so argumentative that another would not dare to put it into print. Yet, he cries from the heights that something must be done to undo a wrong, frozen these many years because the ones who can render justice refuse to listen to the tears of the injured.

A new wind is blowing. And it must blow some good. If the men in control scorn change, there are others — women, too, who demand change.

One great scholar of Hebrew law says, change in family law comes slowly. An understatement, indeed. On the distaff side, one speaks of Jewish family life, insisting that women be treated as full partners in every aspect of Jewish domestic

relations.

Instead of joining forces with those who are outspoken for a new interpretation, all we hear is further criticism of our interpretations. At a recent rabbinical convention, all that the leaders could say is that change must be within the ambit of halacha. No one seeks change—we seek a new meaning in the same way as the prozbol and other devices came about.

When the role of the woman was put to discussion at this same meeting, the panelists were all men. It was reported that several women complained that divorces were being held up by recalcitrant husbands who refused to cooperate with the divorce procedure. Not one rabbi spoke of domestic relations. In place of the displeasure of the women, our Jewish press publishes reams of curiosa on where you can obtain a “kosher” get. All about writing the get — not one word on the harshnesses of domestic relations.

The women are still disunited and can't make demands except in small groups or merely as individuals. Our women are still dominated by men, men who are adamant that the line must be held at all costs, and, it seems, even if their inaction proves to be injurious in the main.

All too many of our young people are leaving our fold in numbers probably greater than in our entire history. Intermarriage is the order of the day. Divorce is growing at a rate to astronomical percentages. We wring our hands instead of applying ourselves. “I found it” is mocked by “We never lost it”. We need action — not catchwords and slogans.

Disunity is a luxury in times like these. A Jew is a Jew. Forget about power. A people is in fever, burning with a disease that can be cured; with all of us joined as a whole, no matter how we regard our religion, let us seriously think out the interpretation needed for the good of our people. We can't continue to indulge in fratricidal war. This is a time for peace — shalom baith — in our household.

—Louis Kramer

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*The opinions expressed by the writers in these pages are not necessarily those of the Review.*

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### ABOUT THE COVER

A Simchat Torah flag as shown in a print made in Poland in the nineteenth century. On the flag can be seen incidents described in the Bible, predominantly, the Sacrifice of Isaac, with the sword held high by Abraham, and the Angel grasping the hilt, so staying the sacrifice. Children walk in Simchat Torah processions carrying such flags as can be seen in the lower left of the flag. Reproduced with permission of The Jewish Museum, Mintz Collection.



# THE THICK DARKNESS THAT COVERS THE EARTH

[Sermon preached on Concluding Day of Passover, 1977]

By Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal

At this stage of my life, whenever I stand on this pulpit to preach, I always feel that my first duty is to thank our Heavenly Father for granting me this blessed privilege. I do so today in those simple but beautiful words — somewhat modified — which every Jewish child is taught to recite in the morning as soon as he or she awakens from sleep: “*Modeh ani lefanecha*, I thank Thee, living and eternal ruler, *shehechezakta bi nishmasi*, that Thou hast strengthened my soul,” so that I may address this congregation so dear and so close to my heart.

We are all familiar with the story of the ten plagues which God brought upon the Egyptians in order to force their ruler Pharaoh to free the Israelites from their bondage. I want to take as my text the ninth plague, that of *choshech*, — darkness. The Bible describes this plague in lengthier fashion than most of the other plagues: “And there was darkness upon the land of Egypt;” “One could feel the darkness;” “It was *choshech afelah*, a thick darkness.”<sup>1</sup> The ancient Rabbis, on reading these words, ask an interesting question: *Kamah haya oso choshech?* “How thick was that darkness?” And the answer is even more striking: “*Rabbosenu amru*, our sages tell us, *ava kedinar haya*, it was as thick as a dollar!”<sup>2</sup>

The *dinar* was the standard coin in ancient times, what the *dollar* is in America, the *pound* in Britain, the *franc* in France. The Rabbis saw in that plague of *choshech* the special darkness which God brought upon Egypt, but it was also to them symbolic of the so called civilization which ruled in the land of

Egypt and which characterized the life of the Egyptians — it was a *choshech afelah*, a thick darkness, a darkness which one could feel, which hovered over their lives. And that darkness was caused by the role of the *dinar* in the people's life — the *dinar* was everything to them; nothing else mattered, the possession of the *dinar* was the one goal to which life was to be directed.

It is interesting to note that the *Zohar*, the classic work of the *Kabbalah*, the philosophy of mysticism which captivated the minds of so many Jews in the middle ages, also interprets this plague of *choshech* in similar fashion: “What was the color of that darkness?” the author asks. And the sage answers: “The darkness was *min tzeva zahav adom*, the color of red gold!”<sup>3</sup> The worship of red gold was the thick darkness which marked the life of the people and which brought upon them all the other plagues — blood, pestilence, misery and human bondage.

Economists, sociologists, philosophers, — all offer their analyses of the plague of darkness that has come upon the world today. I venture to suggest that the analysis of the ancient Rabbis which they give in their few words, offers to us the truest, the clearest answer: the role which the *dinar*, — the *zahav adom* — is playing in the world today.

About a year or so ago Saudi Arabia wanted to float a loan for several billion dollars. She approached the leading bankers in England and in France. But she made one stipulation: no Jewish banker was to be included in this transaction. Mind you, these Jewish financiers and their non-Jewish colleagues were friends, close

buddies, — went together to the same horse races, played cricket together; suddenly, the friendship ceased, the non-Jewish bankers turned their backs to their old buddies, — all rushed and danced before this idol — the *dinar*, the *zahav adom*.

We have today the powerful Arab boycott against Israel, — the injustice and illegality of which is universally recognized. Right thinking legislators in the American Congress, who recognize the injustice and the immorality of this boycott, are working to thwart its effectiveness. But what difficulties face them! And what is the main argument of the opposition? To nullify this boycott will affect American business! No thought of justice, no heed to morality. The *dinar*, the *zahav adom*, that is the only need of man today.

Former American ambassadors — men of high reputation in our political and social life — are now in the employ of a number of Arab countries. They not only do the work for which they were employed, but they also have become their most effective public relations men. Again, what is the main argument in their pleas in behalf of their employers? The opportunities for the acquisition of vast coffers of the *dinar* which the Arab petrodollars offer Americans today.

The noted historian and philosopher, Arnold Toynbee, with whom we Jews have serious disagreement about his views on Judaism and Israel, was nevertheless correct, when he said during a recent interview: “The West is living through an Age of Greed . . . I feel there is something incorrigible about us, a selfishness here in this island, and a scramble for oil among the nations, each looking out for itself. We are measuring everything by money.”<sup>4</sup>

But this plague is not only hovering over international life and bank-

(Continued on Page 19)

# THE ORIGIN OF THE MEZUZA AND ITS ORNAMENTS

By Rabbi David Haymovitz

The Mitzvah of Mezuzah, though it is biblical in origin, has undergone development and change in its application and its ornaments throughout the centuries.

The biblical citation expressed twice in the book of Deuteronomy (6:4-9; 11:13-21) "Uktavtam Al M'zuzot Baitecha U'Vish'arecha," thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house and upon the gates — which might have been taken figuratively, like the admonition to the young man who is told, regarding the parental commandments which he is to obey: "Bind them continually upon thy heart, tie them about thy neck" (Prov. 6:21), has been taken literally.

Some scholars find related phenomena in the First Temple which had, on each side of its portal, a bronze pillar which obviously carried an inscription. One of these pillars was named Boaz, the other, Yachin (Kings I 7:21). However, what these scholars failed to see, is that these pillars have nothing to do with the Mezuzah at all. There is a debate as to their significance and what was their purpose. Obviously, there was an inscription on them. They were placed at the entrance of the Temple, to impress all comers with the omnipotence of God. But this has nothing to do with the Mezuzah whose purpose was to be posted on the entrance to private dwellings.

Still, it is not entirely clear how the Deuteronomic command was to be understood in detail. "Doorposts," in the plural, could apply only to the two posts flanking the abode's entrance. Ever intent upon a strict interpretation of this command, the Rabbis understood it to mean a Mezuzah to be attached to every door in the house, no matter how many rooms. Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg had

twenty-four Mezuzas in his residence.

"Gates," in ancient times, must have meant the Gates of the City. The city, already at an early period, had a surrounding wall and gates leading through the wall. With advancing urbanization, the Mezuzah may have been attached to other gates; for example, the gates of court houses. From the obligation to have a Mezuzah, religious edifices were exempt; the edifice itself made those entering aware of the Divine Presence (Ber. 47a). In the Second Temple, only the Nicanor Gate had a Mezuzah, for the reason that behind it lay "the chamber of the counselors" (Yoma 11a).

How the Mezuzah was originally attached to the doorposts and gates, is not entirely clear. Was the inscription written directly on the building, or was it attached separately, as in later usage? Some scholars say that like other ancients, the Hebrews had at the entrance of their homes the inscription on the post itself. This was done by the ancient Egyptian who had an inscription of a sacred adage at the entrance to the home, and it has been customary among other nations of the east.

In Palmyra, Syria, there has been found a door lintel of the third century with the Jewish inscription of Deut. 6:4-9 in Hebrew letters. The majestic beauty of this portal suggests a synagogue, but the synagogue, as we have said, did not require a Mezuzah. That portal may have belonged to some secular edifice, possibly a court house. This is what the scholars feel warrants the surmise that the text of the Mezuzah, perhaps in the abbreviated form, was inscribed directly on the gate or on the door.

Owing to the complications of the procedure, as well as to the subsequent expansion of the text, the

requisite words needed a piece of parchment. Such a strip of parchment would come rolled up in such a way that the inscription was on the inside, the blank side lying outward. Thus was the inscription protected. While the other nations have since given up that custom, the Jews continued to hold on to this sacred scroll on the doorposts to this very day.

With all due respect to the learned scholars, I would like to stay away from such speculation as to how the Mezuzah came into being the way it is today. All we know is that in the special tractate Mezuzah, which is part of the Talmudic literature edited in the second century, the laws of the Mezuzah, its form, text, even the number of lines, and the words of each line, are prescribed.

How was the roll attached? Originally the method seems to have been to place the roll in a cavity scooped in the post. To us such a thing seems strange, boring a hole in a post as a place for storing, but there is visible demonstration of this usage.

About twenty-five years ago Professor E. L. Sukeni published an account of a stone which was part of a synagogue in Caesarea in ancient Israel. Engraved on this stone was the following inscription in Greek: "Oh God help! The donation of the people in the time of Marutha." (Marutha was probably the head of the synagogue). The stone shows a perfectly circular concavity in which, according to Sukeni, was kept "a candelabrum or something similar."

Some scholars disagree and think that there was kept, not a candelabrum, but rather the Torah on a scroll, or on a number of scrolls. At that time, when the synagogue was not yet equipped with a fixed cabinet for the Torah, the Torah would, after the service, be carried outside the synagogue and, as in this case, placed in the concavity. Similarly, say the



scholars, a small niche in the doorposts of the house, may have admitted the Mezuzah.

Again, we leave speculation to the scholars and return to the tractate Mezuzah (11, 10), which mentions the practice of enclosing the Mezuzah in a "hull". There is nothing unusual about this custom. The scroll of the Torah was likewise protected either with a mantle or, as in the Orient, by enclosure in a chest of wood or metal. The encasement of the Mezuzah was, in the Talmudic period, an innovation as indicated by the fact that it was a matter of debate. Rabbi Meir (second century C.E.) favored it; Rabbi Judah (third century C.E.) objected. That was, nevertheless, the usage which came to prevail. The result was the tendency to give the container artistic embellishment. Originally, however, the container was completely plain, a closed receptacle of wood or metal.

The Mezuzah was regarded as a constant admonition to be mindful of God and His laws. But, as early as Talmudic times, there came to be associated with the Mezuzah, the intent of safeguarding the inhabitants of the house by barring the entrance against evil spirits. During the Middle Ages, with the mystic tendencies, this concept came to be held with growing intensity.

The increasing perils of Jewish life and the hostile surroundings likewise generated a deepening concern for protection. What could be more likely than making the Mezuzah an expression of this solicitude? This was achieved by placing on the hitherto blank side of the roll, the word "Shaddai," the Almighty, a word often inscribed on amulets. The Hebrew letters of the word stand for "Shomer Daltot Y'rael", protects the doors of Israelites. This name of God often was used by mystics to denote protection of the Almighty. This was further amplified by adding certain touches to the text written on the

inner side or on the outside. For example, to the text were added names of certain angels; in the Bible there is imputed to the angels the role "to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11). Five-pointed or six-pointed figures would stand stretched in the Mezuzah's margins; the six-pointed star was deemed especially potent.

Maimonides sanctions nothing more than the word "Shaddai" on the blank side. This has remained to this very day while the addendum on the text side have completely disappeared. As a result of this development, what happened to the container? In its oldest form, the container has no opening; the newer form is supplied with a round or rectangular orifice through which the word "Shaddai" can be seen.

Conflicts were generated by the exposure of the Divine Name. The Name was regarded not as a mere piece of writing; it is imbued with a divine potency. It was considered a violation and disrespect to the name of God if it would be placed where it looks upon something unseemly. Moses of Coucy, a French Rabbi of the thirteenth century, points the way out of this difficulty: "If the Mezuzah is intended for a room occupied by small children, I cover the opening of the Mezuzah with a little wax." The Shulchan Aruch, the code of Jewish law, lays down the rule: "In a place where there is filth, it is well to keep the Mezuzah covered." In the Turei Zahav, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch, David B. Samuel Halevy (1586-1667) discussing that passage, observed that the covering of the Divine Name applies, by extension, to the bedroom.

Instead of covering with wax, hardly an ideal solution, there came into use sometime, the device of placing over the opening through which the Divine Name appears, a kind of doorlet, the wings of which could, as occasion demanded, be closed or open.

Originally, the Mezuzah stood on the doorpost in a vertical position as recommended in the Shulchan Aruch, Yore De'ah. Others preferred it horizontal. Rabbi Moshe Isserlish, an author of the commentary to the Shulchan Aruch, urges the sloping position as a compromise between the two.

So much about the development of the Mezuzah. What about its beautification? Concerning the mitzvah of T'fillin, we find the Mishnah describing the way some of the rich used to beautify the encasements of the T'fillin. The Mishnah tells us of the custom to make the containers of pure silver or gold, a custom which was prevalent until the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and then disappeared. From the seventeenth century, not any earlier, the golden or silver receptacles in which the T'fillin were kept were not in use.

The Mezuzah, it seems, took a different direction. Originally, it was plain, of wood or metal. Only in the last two centuries the Mezuzah has been taken out of its plain container and adorned with gold and silver and all sorts of artistic decorations.

Beginning with the script itself, some artistic attempts in the writing are discernible from an early date. The Talmud (Men 31b) quotes a remark of Rabbi R. Johanan Bar Kapara (about 275 C.E.): "A Mezuzah is permitted if it is written with two or three or even one word (to the line), provided the writing does not form a tent or a tail." This obviously refers to an ornamental style of writing, familiar in those days and known to us through the Roman's custom, who would write out poems in such a way that the lines, by their varying lengths, form the shape of an object. Poems so-shaped were called Carmina Figurata. This was later abolished and completely disappeared from the Mezuzah when strict rules were laid down in the

*(Continued on Page 18)*

# THE BEAUTY OF THE PSALMS

By Rabbi Mordecai H. Lewittes

## Hope in The Lord

The poetry of Tehillim (Psalms) permeates the prayers of the synagogue. On Rosh Hashanah one has a splendid opportunity to read and study these immortal poems which beautify the service on Sabbath, weekday and holiday.

Psalm 27 has a special association with the High Holiday period. The opening words of the psalm are "The Lord is my light and my salvation". The Midrash interprets this verse as follows:

The Lord is my light — on Rosh Hashanah

And my salvation — on Yom Kippur.

In keeping with this interpretation it is customary to recite Psalm 27 for an entire month preceding the New Year. The Rabbis also call attention to verse 13 which has been translated "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living". The Hebrew word for "unless" is *lule*, which contains the letters of Elul, the month before Rosh Hashanah.

The words of the Psalmist are particularly appropriate for this solemn season:

One thing have I desired of the Lord,

That will I seek after;

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord

All the days of my life,

To behold the beauty of the Lord,

And to inquire in His temple.

The Hebrew word *u-l'vaker* has been translated by some "and to visit" by others "and to inquire" or "and to meditate". Visiting the sanctuary and inquiring about or meditating upon its teachings have been spiritually rewarding. The hopeful mood of these meaningful holidays is forcefully expressed in

the final verses of Psalm 27:

Hope in the Lord;

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thy heart,

Yea, hope in the Lord.

Although one traditionally appears before a court of judgment on Rosh Hashanah, the Jew is hopeful. He shows his faith in a favorable court verdict by appearing in white, the color of the robe donned by the acquitted. "Hope in the Lord" is thus an appropriate message for the holiday season.

## The Evening Service

Upon entering the synagogue one recites the exclamation of the ancient seer, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwelling-places, O Israel". The verses that follow, selected from Tehillim, express the mood of the worshiper:

I will come into Thy house by thy abundant grace.

I worship before Thy holy temple with reverence.

Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house,

And the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

When Rosh Hashanah falls on a Sabbath, the evening service includes the beautiful Psalm 92. "A Psalm or song for the Sabbath day. It is good to give thanks unto the Lord." Rashi, prince of commentators, writes that this psalm relates to the world to come when one will enjoy perpetual Sabbath. After the opening verses of thanksgiving, the psalm contrasts the wicked and the righteous. The wicked spring up like grass but also wither away like grass. The righteous, however, "flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon."

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

They shall be full of vigor and strength.

I have heard this psalm of

thanksgiving read in Hebrew and in English at a home for the aged and noted how many were visibly touched by the Psalmist's tribute to those who had attained old age.

Psalm 92 is followed by a brief but majestic psalm which speaks of a Creator who is mightier than Nature:

The floods have lifted up, O Lord,

The floods have lifted up their voices,

The floods lift up their waves.

But above the sound of many waters,

Mighty breakers of the sea,

The Lord on high is supreme.

Rashi states that the psalm refers not only to the forces of Nature but to the nations that oppose God's law. Like the breakers of the sea the wicked raise their powerful voices in protest against God's just retribution, but God's testimonies are true and unailing.

After the festive evening meal the Birkat Ha-Mazon, or grace, is preceded by Psalm 126. This is labeled as *Shir Ha-Maalot* (a song of ascents) since Levites in ancient Jerusalem sang this song as they ascended the steps leading to the sanctuary.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion,

We were like dreamers.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter

And our tongue with singing.

They that sow in tears

Shall reap in joy.

There are two interpretations of the phrase "we were like dreamers". We were like the sleeper who is troubled by a nightmare, says one commentator. Another commentator, however, refers to the joyous vision of the dreamer who foresees a glorious future. Both these interpretations are applicable to our own era when the nightmare of the holocaust has been succeeded by the glorious vision of Israel reborn.

*(Continued on next page)*



### The Morning Service

The psalms recited on the morning of Rosh Hashanah are familiar to us from the weekday and Sabbath services. They are often referred to as P'sukay d'zimrah, verses of song or praise. Unforgettable is the Psalmist's appreciation of the God of Nature, as expressed in Psalm 19:

The heavens declare the glory of God,

And the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Psalm 34 contains a formula for the good life:

Who is the man who desires life  
And loves a long life in which he  
may see happiness?

Keep thy tongue from evil  
And thy lips from speaking  
falsehood.

Depart from evil and do good,  
Seek peace and pursue it.

The prayer of Moses, Psalm 90, reminds us of the need for measuring our days wisely. "Teach us how to number our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom". According to one commentator this is a prayer for long life. According to most commentators, however, it is the quality of life that counts. Whether few or many, let our days be marked by a heart of wisdom, for one does not measure life chronologically.

Psalm 145 is preceded by verses containing the thrice-repeated word "Ashray" (Happy). Rashi calls attention to the fact that there are 25 verses in Psalms beginning with the word "Ashray". These verses might well be called the Hebrew beatitudes for they describe those who are truly blessed. Recited morning and afternoon, Psalm 145 recalls God's daily beneficence to all creatures.

Psalms 146-150 all begin and end with the command Hallelujah (Praise the Lord). Bach, Handel and other composers who have written music based on this theme were preceded by the musicians in the ancient Temple who expressed their

love and reverence for God with musical instruments, with song and with dance:

Praise Him with the sound of the shofar,

Praise Him with the harp and the lyre,

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance,

Praise Him with strings and the flute.

The proclamation of God's kingdom, Ha-Melekh, is followed on Rosh Hashanah by the recitation of Psalm 130, familiarly known by its Latin title "De Profundis". This psalm is an eloquent prayer for salvation. "Out of the depths I call to thee, O Lord."

The morning service ends with the hope that we will be inscribed in the Book of Life. The tradition that the righteous are inscribed in a book is based on a verse in Psalm 69 which states that the wicked will be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written down with the righteous. This picturesque metaphor is also the source of the New Year greeting, "May you be inscribed for a good year."

### The Musaf

The sounding of the shofar is introduced by the sevenfold recitation of Psalm 47:

God has ascended His throne  
amidst shouting,

The Lord with the sound of the shofar.

As we return the scroll to the Ark we proclaim the virtues of the good man who adheres to the teachings of the Torah:

Who may ascend the Lord's mountain?

And who shall stand in His holy place?

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.

(Psalm 24)

The additional service on Rosh Hashanah contains three basic themes: Malkhuyot (sovereignty), Zikhronot (remembrances) and Shofarot (sounding of the shofar).

Each theme is illustrated by Biblical verses, including many from Tehillim:

The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty . . .

He has made His wonderful works to be remembered . . .

With trumpets and the sound of the shofar.

Make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.

The Musaf service ends with quotations from Psalms dealing with peace:

Great peace have they who love Thy law . . .

Peace be within your walls;

In behalf of my brothers and friends let me pronounce peace for you . . .

The Lord will give strength unto His people;

The Lord will bless His people with peace.

The concluding theme of peace is in keeping with the Rabbinic dictum; "Scholars increase peace throughout the world."

### An Immortal Treasure

Virtually every page of the liturgy carries quotations from Tehillim. We are the heirs of the Levites who sang these verses in the ancient Temple.

We are not alone in our love for the Psalms which have become part of the heritage of world civilization. It is significant that the first book published in America was the Bay Psalm Book, an original translation by the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay. Millions have recited and sung the verses of Psalms throughout the world.

To the Jew, Tehillim has been a constant companion and an unfailing source of comfort. Its majestic beauty has made this book one of our cherished treasures.

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**EVERY MEMBER  
ENROLL A NEW MEMBER**

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# A LAWYER'S PLEA FOR CHANGE

## AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF JEWISH DIVORCE

By Joseph Heller

The refusal by a husband to issue a Jewish divorce, after having secured a civil divorce, has brought about legal disabilities, misery and the wife's status as an agunah. Why? Because in Biblical days, the power and right of a husband to unilaterally divorce his wife, was the basic principle of the Jewish law of divorce. Although later modified, the husband still retains the power to deny his wife a Jewish divorce by refusing to deliver a get.

What is the basis for this conclusion? Teachers, commentators and many Rabbis point to the Bible, Deuteronomy 24, as the source. In that passage they will find the divine power as being vested in the husband to send his wife away at will. Because no civil or religious authority may make a fundamental change in biblical mandates, the whim of a husband determines whether his wife, after a divorce without a get, is a free person or an Agunah.

Before we analyze the fragmentary provisions of Deuteronomy dealing with divorce, we should distinguish Biblical Law from Rabbinic Law. Biblical laws are expressly stated in the Torah. At times law derived from scripture by interpretation may become Biblical law. All the other laws are Rabbinic law.

Deuteronomy 24, verses 1–4 reads:

“A man takes a wife and possesses her. She fails to please him because he finds something obnoxious about her, and he writes her a bill of divorcement, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house; she leaves his house-

hold and becomes the wife of another man; then the second man rejects her, writes her a bill of divorcement, hands it to her and sends her away from his house; or the man who married her last dies; then the husband who divorced her first shall not take her to wife again.”

Deuteronomy 24 is clear and free of ambiguities. It merely recites the fact that when a divorced wife remarried and is again divorced, she may not remarry her first husband. It does not specifically declare that a husband has the right to send his wife away.

Construction in its legal sense has been defined as the art or process of determining the proper meaning or application of the provisions contained in a statute or other written instruments. There is no Biblical Law, expressly stated in the Torah, that a husband may send his wife away. Is there anything in the quotation from Deuteronomy which by way of interpretation qualifies the act of sending the wife away as having been intended to be Biblical Law?

Where a construction of a statute is required, it may be reached by reasoning from extraneous connected circumstances, laws or writings, bearing on the same or a connected matter, or by seeking and applying the probable aim and purpose of the provision.

The term “construction” is frequently and commonly used as being synonymous with “interpretation”, although there is a technical difference between the two. “Interpretation”, strictly speaking, is limited to an exploration of the

written text, while “construction” properly goes beyond and may call in the aid of extrinsic considerations. (From Sec. 71, Definition and nature of construction, Book 1, McKinneys Consolidated Laws of New York).

How does one reconcile the asserted right of a husband to send his wife away with the only other two passages in Deuteronomy wherein divorce or its equivalent is mentioned? Deuteronomy 22, 13–19 in substance states, If a man defamed a virgin after he married her, she shall remain his wife; he shall never have the right to divorce her. Deuteronomy 22, 28–29 states; If a man comes upon a virgin who is not engaged and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are discovered, she shall be his wife. Because he has violated her, he can never have the right of divorce.

That the husband may not rely on scripture as authorizing him to send his wife away is evidenced by the Mishnah and works of authority wherein is enumerated (1) instances when a divorce may be granted a wife at the suit of the wife only; (2) instances when a divorce could be obtained at the suit of either party; and, (3) instances when a court, even against the wishes of both parties, could divorce them.

The thirteen canons of Scriptural Interpretation (Rabbi Ishmael) are of no help to those who want to read in Deuteronomy 24, the husband's unilateral right to a divorce. The twelfth rule of construction states: “The meaning of a passage may be deducted from its context or from some subsequent passage.” There is no subsequent passage which refers to the one in question and a reading of the text itself is clear in that it does not treat the question as to who may unilaterally demand a divorce. Likewise, if there is contradiction, canon 13 provides an explanation can be determined only when a third text is found capable of harmonizing the two. Again, there is no third text to

be found.

If a husband may at will divorce his wife, such a right cannot be subject to exceptions. Such a right, if actually exclusive, implies an unquestionable finality. Deuteronomy 24 cannot be interpreted so as to have been intended as a Biblical Law vesting a husband with the right of unilateral divorce.

Whenever possible, a statute will not be construed so as to lead to evil, unjust, oppressive or absurd consequences or to self-contradiction.

The Bible, in Deuteronomy, over and over repeats: "And now, Israel, give heed to the laws and rules which I am instructing you to observe. Keep the commandments of the Lord Our God that I enjoin upon you. Observe them faithfully. He commands you to observe the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets."

Nowhere do we find the subject matter of divorce treated as an ordinance, as a command, as rules which the Jews were instructed to observe. The words, "he writes her a bill of divorcement, hands it to her and sends her away from his house," are hardly words constituting a law or an ordinance.

Divorce is not a subject matter of decretal law of the Bible. The aim of marriage was procreation of children. "Be fruitful and multiply." Gen. 1:28. A fair and reasonable interpretation of Gen. 2:24 which states: "He shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh," seemingly is an absolute prohibition of divorce.

By custom only, nuptials were celebrated by a symbolical act. So were they terminated by another symbolical act. In dismissing his wife from his home, he is terminating the right he acquired over her. In other words, divorce puts an end to the relationship of marriage which was inaugurated by a symbolical form of acquisition, namely betrothal.

### Moses Maimonides

In his Guide for the Perplexed, III, 49, wherein he discussed the commandments included in the 14th class, he observes that friends and family are something that is necessary for man throughout his whole life. "Accordingly, a single tribe that is united through a common ancestor, because of this, love one another, help one another, and the attainment of these things is the greatest purpose of the Law. Hence, harlots are prohibited because through them lines of ancestry are destroyed. In order to prevent these great evils and to bring about the common utility, namely knowledge of the line of ancestry, harlots are prohibited. And there is no way to engage in permitted sexual intercourse other than through singling out a woman for oneself and marrying her in public. Therefore, a binding ceremony and a certain act have been prescribed signifying the woman is allotted to the man; this is the betrothal. Then when the act is made public, it is the ceremony of marriage. Sometimes the union of the two may be discordant and matters in their household not in good order. Consequently, divorce is permitted. However, if a divorce could become valid merely by means of the utterance of words or through the man's turning the woman out of his house, the woman might watch for some negligence on the part of her husband and then go out and claim to be divorced. Or if some individual had fornicated with her, she and the adulterer might claim that she had been divorced beforehand. Therefore, the Law has given to us the ordinance that a divorce can only be made valid by means of a writ attesting it."

All that Maimonides abstracts from Deuteronomy 24 is that a divorce can only be made valid by means of a writ attesting it. The procedure to be followed is what we call adjective law. These are rules of procedure by which sub-

stantive law is given concrete application to persons and events. They emanate from legislatures and courts. Therefore, the wording of the writ and its execution becomes a matter of legislation or by judicial decree of the Rabbis, which of course are subject to change or modification.

### The Talmud

The appellation "Talmud" means literally study and it embodies mental labor and teachings of the ancient Jewish scholars in expounding and developing the religious and civil laws of the Bible during a period of some centuries. The Talmud includes Halachah (law) and Agadah (narrative, history, fables, legends, prayers, religious discourse, philosophical discussion, etc.)

The recordings in the Talmud are actually Rabbinic law. It is claimed some of the Talmudic law is derived from scripture, by interpretation, and so is in fact Biblical Law. Be that as it may, insofar as divorce is concerned, it cannot be construed as originating from the text of the Bible because it does not fall under the umbrella of the thirteen canons of scriptural interpretation.

Herman L. Strack, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, a standard reference book on the Talmud, states:

"One must bear in mind that the Talmud is not a law book, not a code, in which every sentence is unconditionally valid. In the Mishnah itself, diverging opinions are placed in juxtaposition very frequently."

The grounding of a statute in scripture served to widen the written law so as to meet new conditions and it imparted to the oral law the requisite authority. It would appear that it was the desire to secure for Rabbinic statutes an equal or at least a similar foundation in scripture. They could not in



fact possess equal validity because with changing conditions Rabbinic law without question could be abrogated or amended.

The Talmud by itself accomplished a historic miracle. It developed an indestructible vitality, and created a uniform character for a dispersed Jewry, which has been preserved to this day amidst a hostile world. Jewish law may then be said to be a legal element in a twofold Torah by Moses: the Pentateuch (which is the Torah in writing) and the Tradition (the Torah orally transmitted). Since tradition is the unwritten common law, and consisted of an interpretation of the Pentateuch (Mishnah) both do not have the same legal sanctity.

### **Probable Origin of a Husband's Right and Power to Divorce His Wife**

Deuteronomy 24 merely records a historical fact, a custom which prevailed during the time of Moses gave the Torah to the Jews. The origin of the right of a husband to send his wife away is pre-Mosaic, and not Biblical. The law of divorce originated from the practices established by the patriarchal family and one of the principles of government centered around the absolute authority of the oldest ascendant, who was the lawmaker, judge, ruler over his wives and children, and his authority was supreme. Thus was the power of the husband and father established by virtue of his rank in the family. This practice no doubt continued as long as the patriarchal family was nomadic. When a people became agricultural and this established a base of operation with a degree of permanency, there was a gradual change.

Our scripture, written at a time when the domestic law of the patriarchal family was in full vigor, accepted divorce as a matter of fact, as an institution that existed from time immemorial. The story of the Jews reveals that they did

live amongst the gentiles throughout most of their history and they felt the impact of the laws of their neighbors.

Israelites were not at once moulded into a nation but consisted of twelve loosely connected shepherd tribes. Tribes had a simple life in the land of Goshen. The elders of the families, who acted as their chiefs, were consulted on all important occasions. They had no supreme chieftains. Some abandoned their pastoral pursuits and devoted themselves to agricultural occupations.

The best illustration of the ancient power of the 'pater familias' is found in Gen. 21, 9–14: "Sarah said to Abraham, cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son. Isaac." It was at Sarah's behest and because of the ancient power of pater familias, and not because of a Biblical Law, that Hagar was sent away.

### **The Get**

Like the bill of divorcement, the get too was not a biblical decree or a requisite to a Jewish divorce. It seems the get has become a formidable instrument of destruction in that its refusal by the husband makes the wife an agunah.

What is meant by the appellation agunah? A woman who secures a civil divorce but does not obtain a get, because her former husband refuses to give it to her, out of spite, ulterior motives, lethargy or for other motives, assumes the status of an agunah, a "grass widow". Under Jewish Law, she may not remarry, in the absence of a get.

The Talmudic term get, a word which signified broadly a formal written instrument like a deed is really a development during the Babylonian period. The document called a get which the husband was required to deliver to the wife was not the operative fact that effected

divorce; it was the sending away or the dismissal of the wife that did so. Husband and wife's marriage was completely and effectively terminated by the husband in sending her away from his household.

In the course of years the husband's absolute right to terminate the marriage was greatly diminished. In the 11th century it was abolished by a formal ordinance for the Jews of western Europe decreed by Rabbenu Gershon.

Mishnah in the Babylonian Academies developed minute details for the contents of a get and certain required formalities for its execution were imposed. Therefore, the get became subject to Rabbinical control. The Rabbis sought to reconcile the parties; the procedure became judicial in effect, the Rabbi wearing the robe of a Judge.

A rabbinical, unlike a judicial decree of divorce, was non-existent. The get which the Rabbis required the husband to give to the wife was the equivalent of a judicial decree dissolving the marriage. Without it the parties were not divorced. And so if the husband refused to execute and deliver a get, all he was required to do was suffer any and all penalties. It would appear our Rabbis could have ameliorated the status of the wife becoming an agunah by distinguishing between the act of dissolving a marriage and the proof necessary to establish the dissolution.

The formalities imposed in producing this document may be readily discontinued. The substantive act which gives rise to a bill of divorcement is the casting aside of the wife by the husband. The mode of proving it may be changed by ordinance, legislation or a Rabbinical court.

Some Rabbis, in order to alleviate the plight of the agunah, suggest that a clause be incorporated in the Ketubah, such as appointing the wife as agent for the husband so she could execute a get in his name,

etc. This may cause serious problems such as enabling the wife to write herself a get which the husband never contemplated. Another suggested form of relief is to annul or retroactively break the husband's marriage contract. This is unwise because it affects vested interests and rights accrued during marriage.

If we start with the premise that a get is a written instrument which records the acts of the parties, we conclude it is the evidence, the proof, of their understanding and intent and desire. The instrument need not be labeled a get and need not be delivered personally.

What we need is one or more Rabbis with the vision and fortitude or a Rabbenu Gershon. Since the method of obtaining a divorce or a get is not set out in scripture, it may be regulated by a new ordinance to be effectuated by a rabbinical convocation.

A simple ordinance can easily provide that upon proof of a judicial decree dissolving a marriage, the oral testimony of one of the divorced parties, with evidence that their marriage was performed by an ordained Rabbi, would entitle the parties to a get. A Jewish court may then certify by a decree known as a get that the parties are no longer husband and wife.

A contract to marry is a civil matter. Local laws were always recognized by the Jews.

The difficulty, as we see it is the unwillingness or in the absence of higher authority, of a Rabbi or group of Rabbis to declare no longer effective the requirement that only the husband may deliver to the wife a get and without it there can be no divorce.

We have reached in the 20th century a certain degree of maturity to resolve that a dead marriage should receive legal sanction by a decree of divorce. The State legislatures have so decreed.

How should the Rabbinat make a similar decision? They could adopt a similar procedure as is pro-

vided by our legislature by a proceeding called a declaratory judgment (CPLR 2001, Art. 30). In the same manner as our Supreme Court may render a declaratory judgment, having the effect of a final judgment as to the right and other legal relations of the parties to a justifiable controversy, whether or not further relief is or could be claimed, so could a Jewish court do the same.

Some Rabbis are willing to recognize a civil judicial decree of dissolution of a marriage without a Jewish get. The majority of Rabbis do not.

Therefore, it is in order to have a Jewish court or a group of Rabbis, representing the three movements, who are oriented to 20th century living, properly convened, give a declaratory judgment on some of the matters presented in this paper.

Comparable to the New York State Declaratory Judgment Statute is Deuteronomy 16, 18 which in part states:

"You shall appoint magistrates and officials for your tribes in all the settlements given you . . ."  
and in 17, (8)

"If a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over civil law . . . matters of dispute in your courts, you shall promptly repair to the place where the Lord Your God will have chosen and appear before the levitical priests, or the magistrate in charge at the time, and present your problem . . . you shall carry out the verdict."

A request should be permitted to declare the requirement of a get, to bring about the dissolution of a marriage, which should be declared a nullity and of no further force. There are many other keys which will unlock the chains which have so effectively made a mockery of human freedom of action. Suffice it here to point out that a biblical created judicial agency appears in

the Bible to do exactly what we in 1920 accomplished by legislative enactments.

A decree issued by a civil court whether contested or on default, should be sufficient corroborative evidence to support the divorced parties' testimony, who may seek a get. That the Jewish people, who produced a written literature, a world history, a collection of laws, chronicles, books of wisdom, the Hebrew Bible, should be unable to resolve what is tantamount to a fetish, is incomprehensible. The power of individual moral appeal, of an appeal to the free conscience of mankind against the slavish loyalties that have hitherto bridled and harassed our people, can be made by our wise and learned spiritual leaders.

### Stare Decisis

The statement is advanced that, although only part of the Law was given at Mount Sinai, nevertheless the interpretation that would follow, forms part of Scripture. The doctrine of Stare Decisis would then have to be applied.

This doctrine holds, that, if the court had once laid down a principle of law as applicable to a certain statement of facts, it will adhere to that principle and apply it to all future cases if facts are substantially the same. It demands that a previous decision be overturned only on a showing of good cause, but is not an insuperable barrier to reconsideration of prior decisions or principles where adequate cause is shown and impelling changing conditions exist. The doctrine of Stare Decisis is a governmental policy that principles of law should be fixed and definite whenever possible.

Were we to accede to the interpretation given Deuteronomy 24 that a man may write a woman a bill of divorcement, hand it to her and send her away from his house as a final act terminating the mar-

*(Continued on Page 18)*



# MESSIAHS, TRUE AND FALSE

By David Rudavsky

*Professor, Hebrew Culture, New York University*

## Ani Maamin

Hitler's concentration camp survivors tell how Jews in these camps drew moral courage and strength from the twelfth of the Thirteen Articles of Faith which they sang to a haunting Hassidic melody: "I believe with a perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and though he delay, I shall wait each day for his coming." This is one of the principles of Jewish belief compiled by Maimonides (1135-1204) and popularized by its inclusion in the daily prayer-book. It became a refrain intoned repeatedly by despairing concentration camp inmates whom it inspired with trust in a better tomorrow for their people and mankind. This helped to sustain them in the horrors of their daily lives. Even some condemned to the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz and other death camps chanted this melody with their last breaths, knowing full well that for them the sun will never shine again. Thus they bequeathed their hopes for the future to later generations.

The doctrine of the Messiah is rooted in the belief in God as the redeemer of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and as well as from subsequent exiles and oppressions. The deliverance of Israel is however, linked in Jewish lore with that of the world. Twenty-eight hundred years ago, the prophet Isaiah spoke of the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem as the religious capital of the world (Isa 2:3) the citadel of true justice (Isa 1:26ff). In that golden age, men "shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isa 2:4). The exalted Messianic figures who will lead the Jews to their land and usher in a universal age of

peace and tranquility will be a scion of the idealized King David. The Messiah has therefore been referred to as Ben David, a son of the beloved monarch who brought his people military victory and is also credited in Jewish tradition with the authorship of the sacred Book of Psalms, which has been a source of great inspiration and solace to humanity throughout the centuries. It is significant that the Bible envisaged the Messiah as a person endowed with the spirit of wisdom and understanding (Isa. 11:2), not as a supernatural or divine being, but only a mortal and no more.

The prophets have projected the Messianic age "at the end of days", the distant and unknown future, thereby reflecting an optimistic outlook on human history and progress. The Greeks, however, saw history differently. The golden age was part of the "good old days", in the remote past, and the present represented a cultural retrogression, not a progression. The ancient Hebrews seem to have shared this view as may be judged from the Paradise story in Genesis. The Greeks of antiquity also believed that history moved in a series of recurrent cycles of events and episodes that repeated themselves so that there was really "nothing new under the sun", as the Greek-oriented Koheleth (1:10) had declared. Hesiod, a Greek epic poet who lived in the eighth century before the common era, embodied this conception in the metaphor of the golden age preceding the silver, copper and, ultimately, the least worthy present — the iron age. Accordingly, human life is nothing more than a wheel turning aimlessly and without purpose in the same unending cycle. Humanity is there-

fore nothing more than a "cosmic joke" as Arnold Toynbee describes it.

A radical change and breakdown of this utterly pessimistic viewpoint followed the Renaissance that extended roughly to the seventeenth century and, what might be called the Age of Reason that followed it. The epoch may be said to mark the vigorous revival of the Hebrew prophetic Messianic ideal which carried with it a faith in human progress and development. Yet in the Jewish outlook, the Messianic era destined for the "end of days" could not be unduly hastened or accelerated, but will be attained in God's good time. "No one," Maimonides said, "is in a position to know the details of this and similar events before they happen" (M.T. 14:12:2). The rabbis envisage the Messianic era as the period "of the establishment of God's kingdom" on earth. Fervent prayers for the realization of the Messianic hope are scattered throughout our liturgy, and this of course has helped to entrench this ideal in Judaism.

## Messianic Hopes and Hopedefuls

The Hebrew term "Moshiach" transliterated as Messiah in English, and rendered as "Christos" in Greek, merely means "annointed" and refers to the ancient Jewish custom of pouring oil on the king's head rather than placing a crown on it as the consecration ritual. The high priest was similarly ordained in his office and both king and high priest were therefore called "Mishiach Adonoy", the "annointed in God" (Lev 4:3, Isa 24:7,11). Since the sovereign's function was to protect his people from their enemies, the Jews felt the need of a Moshiach especially in times of the tyranny and oppression by alien rulers. In point of fact the period of Jewish independence was relatively brief. As early as the sixth century before the Christian

era, Judea was defeated by Babylon and its inhabitants dispersed. The Babylonians were displaced by the Persians, then the Greeks, the Syrians, Egyptians and finally the Romans, with only an interlude of about a century (165-63 BCE) of self-rule under the Maccabees, a dynasty not of the House of David. Even the Maccabean period was marked by internal strife, suffering and hardship.

The most tyrannical and hard persecution was experienced under the Romans. Several Messianic figures then appeared on the scene, the most prominent of whom was of course the preacher Jesus of Nazareth, crucified by the Romans who had mocked him as "king of the Jews", because he revolted against them. As often happens in such instances, his relatively small group of followers continued to believe in him as their Messiah or Christ even after his death, but the overwhelming majority of Jews never recognized him as such. Other Messianic claimants of the times included Judah of Galilee, and about 45 CE also Theudas (Tuvyah?), who had gathered his devotees at the Jordan, the waters of which he was to have divided. They were all, however, slaughtered there by the Romans. Some sixty years after the destruction of the Holy Temple and the Jewish State, Simon bar Kochba, who had been designated as Nasi or Prince of Israel, almost defeated the mighty Roman legions invading his country (132-135 CE). His failure, however, brought despair to his people, who became reluctant to acknowledge other Messiahs.

#### Shabbetai Zevi (1626-1676)

In the course of the following centuries, Messianic pretenders flashed like lightning across the Jewish skies. The most eminent among them was Shabbetai Zevi, an eager student of the Kabbalah, born in Smyrna to Spanish Jewish parents on Tisha B'av 1626, a fast day

commemorating the destruction of the Holy Temple and the Jewish homeland. Jewish tradition has it that the Messiah was destined to be born on that fateful day. From his youth, Shabbetai had evidenced manic-depressive tendencies, which became worse as he grew older. The horrible Chmielnicki Cossack massacres of 1648, during which half of Polish Jewry was killed, led many to insist that these sufferings were the "pangs of the Messiah", preceding his coming. According to the calculations of the great Jewish mystic Isaac Luria (1534-1572) that was to be the year of Messianic destiny. Christians believed the year 1666 was to bring the Messiah. Thousands were convinced that Shabbetai was their deliverer. He held himself out, as the Messiah ben David who was to establish God's kingdom, while a Polish Jew named Abraham Alman, murdered by the Cossacks, was his Messiah ben Joseph, his precursor who was to die in battle with the enemies of the Lord.

Before long a bitter climax capped Shabbetai's stormy career. On his way to Constantinople early in 1666, with thousands of enthusiastic followers, presumably to seize the Sultan's crown, he was arrested, having been denounced by a Polish antagonist, Nehemiah Cohen, as a rebel plotting the Sultan's overthrow. Brought before the authorities and given a choice between conversion to Islam and death, he chose the former. His adherents were of course shaken to the core; most abandoned him but a few insisted that his apostasy merely made him as the Zohar put it, "good within and evil without". He simply descended to the very pit of sin, to wrest from it the divine sparks imprisoned there, as described in Kabbalistic doctrine. When this process will be completed, the Messiah will arrive. Messianic beliefs die hard, and to this day there are still remnants of the Donmeh or apostates who ac-

cepted a youth named Jacob Querido as the son and reincarnation of Shabbetai. Outwardly the Donmeh practice Islam, but secretly they still observe their own Sabbatean rites, thus leading a double Marrano sort of life.

But Shabbetai had another avatar or reincarnation, in Poland, a confirmed charlatan, Jacob Frank (1726-1791), whose real name was Leibovich. This imposter, born a century after Shabbetai, promulgated a doctrine that resembled the Christian dogma of the Trinity, repudiated the Talmud and advocated strange teachings and wild sexual orgies among his devotees. Finally they converted to Christianity thereby discrediting personal Messianism further. By then the Messianic hope of redemption among many enlightened liberal Jews assumed the form of the Yemot Hamashiah, the "Messianic age" rather than that of a Messianic personage. This it may be observed is in accord with the teaching of Maimonides who had asserted that "no one need think that in the days of the Messiah any of the laws of nature will be set aside . . . The sole difference between the present and the Messianic era is delivery from servitude to foreign powers," (M.T. 14:12:1,2). Unfortunately, however, humanity has suffered severe setbacks in this era of human progress, as evidenced by the Holocaust and current strife and conflict. In Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century the Messianic impulse took the direction of an intensified religious feeling which developed into the Hassidic movement, which was swept away in the Holocaust, but is now being revitalized.

#### New Messianic Cults

In America, Jews are lured to a wide assortment of mystical groups and religious cults launched mainly in recent years. They attract some seeking expression for their Messianic inclinations, spiritual



satisfaction or greater meaning in life, but do not find an outlet in their own Jewish heritage because they have little knowledge, understanding or appreciation of it. These often include gullible or easily deluded young people. They not only surrender their own traditions, but also their family affiliations, friendships, freedom and often possessions when joining these sects. They, therefore, are of serious concern to parents, families and the Jewish community.

The most successful among these new religious movements is the controversial Unification Church founded in Korea in 1954 by the Korean-born Sun Miyung Moon and introduced in this country in 1973. In 1946 Moon was excommunicated by the Presbyterian Church in which he was trained as a minister. According to his theology incorporated in his Divine Principles he is the Lord of the Second Advent, and as such, presumably the successor to Jesus Christ, and ultimately the Messiah who will deliver the world from Satanism and Communism. "The inner content of Judaism is corrupt," Moon declared. The first Jewish Israel and the second, Christian Israel having failed, Moon is now preparing the Third Israel. He combines his religious activities with a vast business enterprise said to be worth thirty million dollars — in itself a very suspicious set up. Moon's full-time members are required to give up all their earnings and property to the Church. A former Jewish

Moonie, Arthur Robins, age 22, reported that he was taught that Hitler was compelled to murder six million Jews because they were guilty of the Crucifixion. He described Moon's organization as an army, rather than a church.

While the Unification Church denounces Judaism, and disparages Christianity, "Jews for Jesus", started in 1973, presumes to affect a synthesis between the two religions. While urging that one can be both a Jew and a Christian simultaneously, the "Jews for Jesus" are actually neither. To Christians the Messiah has already come; to Jews, not as yet, as may be judged from the prevailing conflict and hostility in the world. In the attempted merger, Judaism and Christianity are both regarded as incomplete in themselves. "Jews for Jesus" is viewed as an empty no man's land between the two faiths.

Hare Krishna, an exotic Oriental cult, requires a complete surrender to the popular god Krishna, as a means of attaining "Krishna consciousness". To achieve it, one must follow a strict regimen of conduct reminiscent of the strict requirements of Orthodox Judaism. Two top leaders of the movement were indicted last year for attempted extortion of \$20,000 from the father of a member, and also on charges of false imprisonment. Another mystical movement, Transcendental Meditation (TM) has attracted Jews. Because it is taught in a few public schools, it has given rise to the church-state issue. The medita-

tive mystical doctrines of Zen Buddhism, especially strong in Japan, have been introduced in the United States in the 1950's. One wonders why the Jews in the mystical cults have not been steered into the Kabbalah or Hassidism. Other Jews, seeking constructive spiritual causes could no doubt find it in various Zionist, Jewish social, cultural or religious causes without wandering off to alien movements. To retain our Jewish youth we shall have to strengthen Jewish religious family life, making the home a citadel of Judaism rather than merely a dining and sleeping facility.

An anecdote well illustrates the implications of Jewish Messianism. The Jews in a remote Galician village, a distance from the highway, hired one of their number to serve as a sentinel on the highway to watch for the Messiah and warn them of his coming, so that they could join him and go with him to the Promised Land. One day Lord Rothschild drove by on the highway and saw the quaint-bearded sentinel sitting there and poring over a religious tome. He became curious, alighted from his carriage and asked the man what he was doing there. When the latter explained his purpose, Rothschild offered to take him to London and employ him as a watchman in one of his banks. "No," answered the sentinel. "I prefer to remain here and watch for the Messiah, for this is a life job."

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# THE CHEDER IN THE SHTETL

By Jacob Hoffman

*(Our Gabbai, Jacob Hoffman, has written his memoirs for the Yiddish press and has entitled his autobiography "Hazzan Yitzchok the Butcher's Youngest Son". More than seventy-five years have gone by since his birth in Ostrove, a city no longer on the Jewish map, destroyed by Hitler's hordes. Mr. Hoffman has given the Review permission to publish a portion of his book, and we have selected the third chapter, which gives a vivid picture of the cheder he attended as a child.)*

During my lifetime I've heard and read a lot of adverse criticism about the one-room school of times past and the old-time teacher brandishing the cat-o'-nine-tails as a means of enforcing discipline. However, I'd like to beg the indulgence of all those distinguished deprecators and make bold to rise in praises of the two teachers with whom I had the privilege of studying in Ostrove. Perhaps they didn't have degrees in pedagogy but they exercised a greater and more beneficent influence over their pupils than present-day professors have on university students.

Next to the direction given me by my parents, I owe the greatest debt to my two teachers, whose ministrations enabled me to withstand so many trying experiences and live to see children and grandchildren appreciative of Jewish values and maintaining our traditions.

It's no exaggeration to say that the school teacher had the child under his influence for longer periods of time than the parents, since classes started at eight o'clock in the morning and didn't end until eight at night. It's no wonder, therefore, that many pedagogues, mine included, at times had to en-

dure the most mischievous kind of deviltries on the part of the students. Children have to let off steam, so when else did they have the opportunity to play their pranks except during the twelve-hour period they spent in school?

We had no two or three-month summer vacation from school. School was open continuously, whether it was summer or winter. And I really can't bring myself to be envious of American school children who ride home in heated buses after their day is finished. In my own case, I recall trudging along in the hardened snow that gave off a crunchy sound under foot, on a road lighted only by a hand-held lantern that quite frequently was extinguished by even a moderate gust of wind. Such sweet remembrance of things past radiates sufficient warmth and light to illuminate one's latter years. Many times when I drive along in my new car, its headlights projecting powerful beams of light in front of me, I become nostalgic for that little lantern of my school days that shed barely enough light to enable you to see where to take your next step. That small lantern is now embedded in my consciousness and has become an ineffable part of the whole small-town panorama whose image has not faded from my memory despite the swift passage to many turbulent years.

Sometimes when I tell my grandchildren how we students used to make our way home from school late in the evening, a prayer book, Bible and notebook in one hand and a lantern in the other, they look at me as though I were depicting a scene from Disneyland for them. No matter how frequent or lengthy your explanation, is there any way they can understand that

the one-room school house forged generations immutable as iron in their loyalty to Judaism and that the lanterns carried on the way gave them direction in their wanderings over oceans and deserts.

My first teacher, who taught me to read Hebrew and the beginnings of Bible study, was perfectly justified when he administered the famous proportion of "one blow to the upper portion of the anatomy and seven below", after I and some other mischievous kids brought terror to the rebbetzin's heart when we entered the vestibule. A tub of water for drinking purposes stood in that vestibule, from which a door opened to the stable where the teacher's "Farm" was located, said farm consisting of a single goat that supplied the household with milk all week long.

And while he was giving me a going-over with the cat-o'-nine-tails for my first offense, he took the opportunity to punish me because of my childish mania for trapping birds and doves in a cage. "God loves all His creatures, and you're committing a heinous sin in catching birds and holding them captive like soldiers who have been taken prisoner", he admonished me as he laid it on.

What the teacher said didn't go to waste entirely. We kept on catching birds and doves after that incident as well but instead of keeping them in the cage, we fed them, gave them some water and let them loose.

The second teacher, with whom I advanced to the study of the Bible with Rashi's commentary, was even stricter than the first. He loved to take a nip of whiskey, followed by a bit of cheese, while we were in the middle of our lessons. When his temper flared and he began chewing out a student, bits of cheese would shower from his mouth. On such a day we youngsters would say that the rebbe had made all of us "milchig" in the ritual sense. He used to come to our house on



Poltosker Street every Saturday afternoon to listen to me recite while father looked on. My pleasure on certain of those Sabbaths wasn't anything to write home about, particularly when father looked at me angrily because of some error and the teacher added a little pinch for good measure. "But you just learned that commentary by Rashi! How could you forget it so soon?", the teacher would mutter as he gave my shoulder a nip that clearly showed his annoyance. He was greatly mortified that Hazzan Isaac the Butcher had to witness how little his youngest child had accomplished in school.

Today I can reveal the truth. I really had no interest in scholarly pursuits. The birds and doves had a greater attraction for me than school. Besides, on Ostrove Street there was a combination bakery and confectionary store where the baker had learned his trade in Warsaw. He made "pirozhenes", (fruit-filled pastries), that were absolutely rapturous and definitely surpassed my teacher's cheese fragments in taste. He never lost the name "Warsaw Baker" because of his origins. In Ostrove he married a cousin of mine, Aunt Beile's daughter. Two of their children escaped the holocaust and came to America after the war.

Another sinister influence that made it difficult for me to keep from being restive in school was the very extensive forest that stretched over a distance of about six miles between Ostrove and Zembrove. In that forest there were large quantities of blackberries and even though stories were bruited about concerning Polish bandits who attacked people in the forest and robbed and beat them, many youngsters took off for the woods and partook ecstatically of the juicy berries whose color blackened their tongues and thus betrayed them to their teacher.

Incidentally, in World War I the Germans laid down some tracks

from the forest to the railroad station not far from Ostrove and carried off about half the trees to Germany for lumber.

The pranksters in school didn't really have to go far afield for snacks. Not far from the school, actually just a few houses away, there was a garden belonging to an elderly woman. A bunch of kids and I used to break into the garden and pick a few fresh cucumbers that had a divine taste.

"You little bandits, out!", the woman would shout the moment she heard our youthful steps. We scooted out of the garden as though someone were shooting at us but the next day would see us in the garden once again. We would pick a few more cucumbers, from which we made a little snack. (Of course, not before saying the proper blessing for vegetables!).

Later on in life I strongly regretted having caused the lady such distress and from time to time I used to bemuse myself by thinking that if the garden in Ostrove were still in existence, I would make every effort to go back there and make good the damage I had done.

But if one is fated to retrace the steps of his childhood, even a holocaust can't prevent it.

During the frequent visits I have made to Israel I always make it a point to meet with fellow-townsmen from Ostrove and exchange reminiscences about the world that disappeared. At one such encounter that took place a few years ago, I engaged in conversation with a woman from Ostrove whose name is Freide. She told me that her mother had had a garden near the synagogue where the youngsters from school used to sneak in and quickly make off with a few cucumbers. She merely tossed it off as a reminiscence of the past, saying that her mother would eat her heart out after every one of our forays in the garden. Freide continued: "Those youngsters were small but indefatigable and cer-

tainly had an insatiable appetite for freshly-ripened cucumbers."

She spoke longingly of her experiences, her mother, the garden and the students and my face got redder and redder with utter embarrassment. One thing lead to another and suddenly she asked me whether I wasn't Cantor Isaac the Butcher's youngest son, who together with his gang carried on so and wouldn't leave her mother's garden alone.

It goes without saying that I immediately confessed and declared myself guilt of the "crime" and from that moment on there developed an extraordinarily close friendship between our two families, as though we were blood relatives. Every time I travel to Israel I visit them. It's interesting that my children have become very close with Freide's and my grandchildren with hers. In the course of time, Freide's daughter and son-in-law, Mira by name, have grown so close to my children that they correspond frequently and visit each other, as do their respective children.

Mira is a high-ranking officer in the Israeli navy. He took me to a whole series of Independence Day celebrations and showed me "a few things" about Israel's defense forces that filled my heart and spirit with great pride.

I went with him to Dizengoff Square and afterwards to Kings of Israel Square, where they danced and sang till the gray of dawn. It's strange that all the time I was in his company I imagined hearing his wife's grandmother, screaming at me: "Out, villains!" I like to think that in her heavenly abode she knows that our families have become reconciled and are today the very best of friends.

But let's go back to the school in Ostrove. The teachers didn't experience too much difficulty with me because I gave up my studies shortly after becoming bar-mitzvah and began trading with the Russian

*(Continued on Page 19)*

## A Lawyer's Plea

(Continued from Page 12)

riage, why interpose the additional requirement of a get? What is meant by the words, "hand it to her?" Does he have to deliver the get to the woman personally or interpose an agency? What is the fundamental law?

Had scripture written, "and he writes her a bill of divorcement and in her hand he shall put it," we would be obliged to take the verse literally. On the other hand, the Mishnah, Gitten 8, states: "If one threw a letter of divorce to his wife while she was in her own house, or within her courtyard or in her lap or in her waste basket, she was divorced." Obviously, if *stare decisis* is to be applied, these interpretations appearing in the Mishnah ought to set at rest the requirement that the husband must hand a get to his wife. A bill of divorcement is legally sufficient without a get. It would appear what was decided was that a woman should have some form of notice that the man is seeking a divorce.

In this respect, some form of reasonable notice must be given to a person whose rights are affected, in order to satisfy the requirements of what has become known as "Due Process of Law".

Gitten has to a degree defined the term "Due Process of Law", as later developed, as inhibiting the taking of one man's property and giving it to another, or adversely affecting human rights, contrary to settled usages and modes of procedure, and without notice of an opportunity to be heard.

### Authorities in Support

There is authority to support the position by the writer. We quote a few:

Dr. J.H. Hertz in his books, "The Pentateuch" and "Haftorat", Hebrew text, English translation, commenting on Deuteronomy 24, states:

"What we have here is no law instituting or commanding divorce. This institution is taken for granted. We are given a regulation in regard to it, viz., that a man who has divorced his wife may not remarry her if her second husband divorced her or died."

The author of the book, "The Jewish Law of Divorce," David Werner Amron, page 12, states:

"The Mosaic Law, the foundation of the legal system of the Hebrews, cannot be understood unless it is read by the light of its commentary, the Talmud. The law of divorce cannot be said to exist in Biblical Code, there being a few scattered references to Deuteronomy."

George Horowitz in his excellent book, "The Spirit of Jewish Law", in discussing termination of marriage, states the origin of divorce as follows:

"In early times the husband as head of the family, dismissed his wife at pleasure."

Professor George Foote Moore in his book, "Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era of the Age of the Tannaim", in Vol. II, page 123, states that the requirement of a bill of divorce is preserved by this law, not created by it.

### Conclusion

We often speak of a Rabbi as a sage, a man venerated for his wisdom, judgment and profundity. With all that learning, ability, sagacity and leadership, the situation presented should not remain insoluble. A resolution of the problem is in order now, and not in the distant future.

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## WE URGE YOUR PARTICIPATION!

### • ENROLL NEW MEMBERS

## The Mezuzah

(Continued from Page 6)

Mishna as to the contents, form, number of lines and words that it should contain. The Mezuzah must be hand-written on parchment and every Mezuzah must correspond in the number of words and lines to the strict prescription. The Mishna asserts that the lack or malformation of one single letter would render the entire Mezuzah unusable.

The oldest ornamental Mezuzah in existence is found in the Jewish Museum in London. It has been explained as the product of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. But there is great doubt as to the correctness of this dating.

As to the outer ornament of the Mezuzah, according to scholars, until the fifteenth century the Mezuzahs were plain and made without any ornaments. Some scholars believe that the ornamental Mezuzah did not appear until the seventeenth century. The home of these new creations were mostly the Eastern European communities in countries such as Poland, Russia and Bohemia. But in the last two hundred years great artistic ingenuity was invested in the design, shape and style of the Mezuzah. It has become a monument of a folk art continuing to this very day. It usually avoids the human figure, but heavily employs religious expression and thought, and even sometimes an image, such as Moses and the Tablets of the Law.

In areas of Russia and Poland, the Mezuzah was beautified by means of silver and even gold. The Jews of Eastern Europe, unlike those of Western Europe, showed special skill in the artistic use of silver in the adornment of the Mezuzah.

Thus, the Mezuzah which had started as a reminder of God's presence on the door entrance, has evolved and become a symbol of beauty and identification for the Jewish family, the Jewish home.



## The Thick Darkness

(Continued from Page 4)

ing transactions, but it has infested our every day life — in business, professions, politics. What crimes are committed because of this greed, — the worship of the *dinar*!

I do not mean to underestimate the need of the dollar. Man must make a living. Without the *dinar* we, could not exist. But the evil against which the Rabbis of old, and Toynbee today, protest is the greed which prompts men, who have enough not only to subsist, but to support themselves and their families for the rest of their lives, who rush to acquire more and more — never satisfied — who turn this *zahav adom* into an idol which they worship. As Moses explained, when pleading before God in behalf of his people who worshipped the golden calf in the wilderness: "Thou hast given them so much money that they have turned their gold into a god which they worshipped!"<sup>5</sup>

There is one concluding thought which I must mention. The Bible, in telling us of the plague of darkness which covered the land of Egypt, adds this significant statement: "And to all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings."<sup>6</sup> What a beautiful tribute the Bible pays the Israelite slaves in the land of Egypt!

With the momentary exception of the incident of the golden calf in the wilderness, the guilt of which they soon felt, we can truthfully say that throughout the ages there was light in the dwellings of the Jews. Nay, more, that light was evident not only in their homes, but, as the Rabbis significantly add: "Wherever the Jew went, *yatzah haor into*, the light went with him!"<sup>7</sup> In his business, profession, wherever he went, the darkness of the worship of the *dinar* did not go with him.

Alas, what a change has come upon the modern Jew! The compli-

ment of the Bible no longer applies to him. In this there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew today. The plague of the thick darkness — thick as the *dinar*, whose color is the *zahav adom* — red gold — is covering the entire world; it has affected the Jew and non-Jew alike!

There is only one hope for the salvation of the world today — the recognition of the thickness of the plague of *choshech* which has come upon us. Once we know that it is the thickness of the *dinar* we may awaken to the need to dispell the darkness, and to bring into our lives and into the lives of all humanity the light of true civilization to bless the lives of all mankind.

### REFERENCES

1. Exodus, 10:21,22.
2. Exodus Rabbah, 14:1.
3. Zohar, II:242, quoted in *Torah Sh'lemah*, note 71, to Exodus, 10:22.
4. Quoted in N.Y. Times, March 1, 1974.
5. Rashi, Deut. 1:1, quoting Hosea, 2:10.
6. Exodus, 10:23.
7. *Torah Sh'lemah*, note 72, to Exodus, *ibid*.

## SUPPORT THE KOL NIDRE APPEAL

## The Cheder

(Continued from Page 16)

soldiers who were stationed in Komorove. Apparently my father came to the realization that he wouldn't succeed in moulding me into a rabbi, so he let me follow the path I set out on. I promised myself that no matter where I wound up I would carry proudly and fully live up to the appellation they had given me in town, Hazzan Isaac the Butcher's Youngest Son.

You're no doubt wondering what kind of bar-mitzvah celebration my parents arranged for the child of their old age? They called me up to the Torah in the old synagogue and I chanted the blessings and the haftorah like a veteran but there was no banquet prepared for me. I don't even recall whether father brought the customary honey cake and whiskey to services. There was already the smell of gunpowder in the air and the First World War was at our doorstep.

Perhaps that's why the Almighty compensated me and granted me the privilege of celebrating the bar-mitzvah of one of my grandsons not once, but three times in the summer of 1972, when I and my departed wife were in Israel with the family. One party took place at the Brooklyn Jewish Center where I'm a member of long standing.

We had another occasion for joy at the Western Wall. Nearly five years have passed since that time and yet I can still see so vividly the bar-mitzvah boy reciting the blessings hard by the venerable stones of the Wall. I like to imagine that the stones transmitted a message to my parents in heaven from their great grandson, who came to put on phylacteries in the holy city of Jerusalem.

We arranged a third function for relatives, fellow-townpeople and other friends when we attended services in the Zichron Kedoshim

(Continued on Page 22)



## NEW YEAR GREETINGS FROM OFFICERS AND STAFF

On the eve of the Jewish New Year 5738, the officers of the Brooklyn Jewish Center extend to all the members and friends of our institution their best wishes for a year of health, happiness and joy. May we, together with all mankind, be blessed with peace and prosperity.

In this hour, as the New Year is ushered in, we, the officers of this institution, take this opportunity of thanking all our members for their devotion and loyalty to our Center. We are confident that with the co-operation of our membership the year 5738 will be crowned with new achievements and success in our work on behalf of our community and our people.

L'Shonah Tovo Tikosevu!  
Benjamin Markowe, President  
Emanuel Cohen, Hon. President  
Louis Kramer, Vice-Pres.  
Harry Leventhal, Vice-Pres.  
Abraham M. Lindenbaum, Vice-Pres.  
Julius Kushner, Hon. Vice-Pres.  
Meyer Abrams, Treasurer  
Aaron Gottlieb, Hon. Treasurer  
Murray T. Feiden, Secretary

### From the Center Staff

The Center Staff extends to the Rabbis, Officers, Trustees, Governors and members of the Brooklyn Jewish Center and their families cordial greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

### From the Sisterhood

The officers of the Sisterhood extend heartiest New Year Greetings to all of our members and their families. Sisterhood looks back with pride and satisfaction on its activities during the year 5737 and

hopes for an even more successful season in 5738.

With best wishes for a Shono Tova Umesuka.  
Mrs. Julia Spevack, President  
Mrs. Ida Cohen  
Mrs. Sylvia Kramer  
Mrs. Betty Marks  
Vice Presidents

Mrs. Gertrude Farb, Rec. Secy.  
Mrs. Molly Markowe, Corr. Secy.  
Mrs. Ann Beris, Soc. Secy.  
Mrs. Sylvia Moskowitz, Treas.

### From the Men's Club

The officers of the Men's Club wish all its members, families and friends a year of health and good tidings and a year that will bring true peace to our beloved land, to the State of Israel and all mankind.

We invite each and everyone of you to participate in this coming year's events.

May the Lord bless the entire Center and may we and our families all be inscribed in the Book of Life and Happiness.

L'shonoh Tovo Tikosevu.  
Stanley Bresnick  
President

Louis Kramer  
Dr. Milton Schiff  
Louis Moskowitz  
Honorary Presidents

Isaac Franco  
Chas. Marks  
Archie Levinson  
Nathan Zuckerbrot  
Vice Presidents

Max Greenseid  
Financial Secretary  
Murray Greenberg  
Administrative Assistant

# News of The Center

## SABBATH WORSHIP

Friday, September 2  
Kindling of Candles: 7:07 P.M.  
Services: 7:00 P.M.

## SABBATH MORNING SERVICES

September 3 — 8:30 A.M.  
Sidra: KEE TAVO  
Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8  
Prophets: Isaiah 60

Friday, September 9  
Kindling of Candles: 6:56 P.M.  
Services: 6:00 P.M.

## SABBATH MORNING SERVICES

September 10 — 8:30 A.M.  
Sidra: NITZAVIM  
Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20  
Prophets: Isaiah 61:10-63:9

Friday, September 16  
Kindling of Candles: 6:44 P.M.  
Services: 6:00 P.M.

## SABBATH MORNING SERVICES

September 17 — 8:30 A.M.  
SHABBAT SHUVAH  
Sidra: VAYELEKH  
Deuteronomy 31  
Prophets: Hosea 14:2-10  
Micah 7:18-20; Joel 2:15-17

Friday, September 23  
Kindling of Candles: 6:32 P.M.  
Services: 6:00 P.M.

## SABBATH MORNING SERVICES

September 24 — 8:30 A.M.  
Sidra: HAAZINU  
Deuteronomy 32  
Prophets: II Samuel 22:1-51

## RABBI HAYMOVITZ

will preach the sermons on all Sabbath mornings beginning September 10.

## CANTOR BERKOVITCH

will officiate on Sabbath mornings. September 10 and 24.

## SATURDAY AND DAILY MINHA SERVICES FOLLOWED BY MAARIV

During the month of September at 7:30 P.M.



## High Holy Days Services

### Rosh Hashanah

Services for Rosh Hashanah will be held on Monday and Tuesday evenings, September 12 and 13 respectively at 6:00 and 7:00 o'clock; and Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, September 13 and 14 at 7:30 o'clock. The Torah reading will commence at 9:15 A.M. The shofar will be sounded both mornings at 10:15 A.M. All Worshippers are requested to be in their seats before that hour. The sermon on both days will be preached at about 10:30 A.M. The doors will be closed while the sermon is delivered. The Musaf services will begin at 11:00 o'clock and the services will finish at approximately 1:15 o'clock.

### Rosh Hashanah Sermons

The sermons will be preached on both days of Rosh Hashanah at 10:30 o'clock.

Rabbi Levinthal will preach on the first day of Rosh Hashanah.

Rabbi Haymovitz will preach the sermon on the second day.

### Yom Kippur

The Kol Nidre services which ushers in the Fast of Yom Kippur will be held on Wednesday evening, September 21, at 6:45 o'clock.

Yom Kippur services will begin on Thursday morning, September 22, at 8:30 o'clock. The Yizkor service will be held at 11:15 A.M.

On Yom Kippur Eve, the sermon by Rabbi Levinthal will be preached immediately after the chanting of Kol Nidre. On Yom Kippur morning, the sermon by Rabbi Haymovitz will follow the Memorial Services.

### Cantor and Choir to Officiate in Main Synagogue

Rev. Efim Berkovitch will officiate at the services to be conducted on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the Main Synagogue. He

will be assisted by the Choir under the direction of Mr. Aron Dinovitzer.

### Candle Lighting During High Holy Days

Candles will be lit for the Rosh Hashanah holidays on Monday, September 12 at 6:51 P.M. and Tuesday, September 13 at 7:54 P.M.

On Wednesday evening, September 21, (Kol Nidre Eve), candles will be lit at 6:35 P.M.

### Yizkor Services

For the benefit of the community, those without tickets, will be admitted to the Main Synagogue, to participate in the Yizkor services on Yom Kippur, Thursday, September 22 at 11:15 A.M.

### Holiday Gym Schedule

The Gym and Baths Department will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, September 13-14 for the Rosh Hashanah holiday and will reopen on Thursday morning, September 15 at 10 A.M. for women and at 3:00 P.M. for men.

The following week, the Department will be closed Thursday, September 22, for Yom Kippur and will reopen Friday, September 23, at 1 P.M. for men.

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### THE SELIHOT SERVICE

on Sunday morning, September 4th  
will be followed by the  
ANNUAL SELIHOT BRUNCH  
of the MEN'S CLUB

All worshipers are invited to  
attend as guests of MEN'S CLUB.

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### SELIHOT SERVICES

Sunday Morning, September 4th  
7:30 A.M.

Conducted by  
CANTOR EFIM BERKOVITCH  
With the Choir Directed by  
MR. ARON DINOVITZER

### SUKKOT SERVICES

#### Kindling of Candles

Monday, September 26: 6:27 P.M.

Tuesday, September 27: 7:31 P.M.

Services: 6:15 P.M.

Tuesday and Wednesday mornings

September 27 and 28: 8:30 A.M.

### SHABBAT HOL HAMOED SUKKOT

Friday, September 30

Kindling of Candles: 6:15 P.M.

Shabbar, October 1 — 8:30 P.M.

Sidra: Exodus 33:12-34:26;

Numbers 29:20-26

Prophets: Ezekiel 38:18-39:16

### HOSHANA RABBAH SERVICES

Monday, October 3 at 7 A.M.

### CONCLUDING SUKKOT SERVICES

#### Kindling of Candles

Monday, October 3: 6:15 P.M.

Tuesday, October 4: 7:18 P.M.

Services: 6:15 P.M.

Tuesday and Wednesday mornings

October 4 and 5: 8:30 A.M.

Memorial (Yizkor) Services on

Tuesday, October 4: 10:15 A.M.

### SISTERHOOD'S

#### ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Wednesday, November 16

Reserve the Date!

Mrs. Belle Franco, Chairman

### HIGHLIGHTS OF SISTERHOOD'S PROGRAMS

Wednesday evening, October 12

Testimonial to Belle Franco

upon completion of her  
service as President

Wednesday, October 19

Bus trip — watch for details

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### CALENDAR DIARIES

1977-5738 Calendar Diaries will be available for the asking at the Main Desk. We are indebted to Riverside Memorial Chapel and Boulevard Chapel for their kindness in providing Diaries for our members.

# The Cheder

(Continued from Page 19)

(Memorial to the Martyrs) Synagogue which my wife and I established in Maoz Aviv, a suburb of Tel Aviv inhabited by Haganah officer veterans. The bar mitzvah was celebrated on Shabbat Nachamu (the Sabbath of Consolation), two days after the recitation of Eichah, (the Book of Lamentations) and Kinnot (elegiac poems) at the Western Wall.

I called the synagogue by the name Zichron Kedoshim in reverential remembrance of the Ostrove Jews who perished in the Second World War. On that, Saturday, when we reached the prayer called the Great Kedushah (the third blessing in the Silent Devotion, which includes the first paragraph of the Shema) — I told the assembled guests about my home-town Ostrove, my parents and my brothers and sisters and how modest and unpretentious my own bar-mitzvah was. I believe that the highlight of my address was a greeting from my former schools and teachers who implanted in their students such an extraordinary love for Jewishness, Jews and Zion.

I'm not entirely certain even today whether the sabras, to whom I spoke that Saturday comprehended what I had to say. As for myself, I prayed to the Almighty in Jerusalem and pray today that my children and grandchildren always remember that they bear within themselves some of the cultural baggage that I inherited from my schools and teachers in Ostrove.

- **SUPPORT THE KOL NIDRE APPEAL**
- **GIVE & GET ADS FOR OUR ANNUAL JOURNAL**

## THE BROOKLYN JEWISH CENTER FORUM COMMITTEE

presents

## THE JACOB HOFFMAN LECTURES

a series of outstanding  
programs dedicated to the  
memory of Mr. Hoffman's  
beloved wife, Bella,  
at the Center

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 at 2:30 P.M.

REBBETZIN ESTER JUNGREIS

who has brought Judaism to our  
young college people, and restored  
many to the Fold, Come hear her  
legendary, magical voice.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 at 2:30 P.M.

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

Outstanding Anglo-Yiddish author  
and lecturer

A third event in this series  
featuring Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach  
will be announced shortly.

Contributions of \$5.00  
for the entire program  
or \$2.00 for an event.

JOSEPH H. AARON  
Chairman



**PATRONIZE YOUR  
SISTERHOOD  
BOOK AND GIFT SHOP**

Sisterhood can fill your gift needs and your requirements for books of Jewish interest and Jewish content.

Make these purchases at the Center!

*Reserve*

THURSDAY EVENING  
OCTOBER 27, 1977

for our  
**ANNUAL MEETING**

Election of Officers

\* Annual Report by our President,  
Mr. Benjamin Markowe

\* Refreshments and Entertainment  
Social Hour

# Superlative Center Catering Service!

The beautifully decorated ballrooms of the Center provide the finest facilities for catering your party.

There are separate rooms for each part of the affair: the Temple, the Bridal Room, the Reception Rooms and the Dinner Room.

The Gold and White motif of the lobby and the spacious ballrooms permit the use of any table decor you may choose.

**Attractive price arrangements** make it advantageous and conducive for you to visit our Center's Catering Department.

**Our Parking Lot is conveniently located adjacent to the Center Building.**

Call our Office for arrangements.

*Rosh Hashanah Greetings*

*New Year Greetings*

FROM

MR. and MRS.

JEFFREY AARON

AND FAMILY

57-68 228th Street

Bayside, N.Y.



*New Year Greetings*

*from*

HON. and MRS.

A. DAVID BENJAMIN

AND FAMILY

20 Plaza Street

*Greetings*  
*for the*  
*New Year*

FROM

MR. and MRS.

EMANUEL COHEN

10 Plaza Street



*A Very Happy*

*New Year*

FROM

MR. and MRS.

EDWARD ISAACS

IN FOND REMEMBRANCE ON THE

HIGH HOLY DAYS

על זה אנו בוכים

In Loving Memory of SARAH H. KUSHNER

קמו בניה ויאשרוה

בעלה ויהללה

רבות בנות עשו חיל

ואת עליית על כלנה

Therefore do her children bless her,  
And her husband also praises her,  
Saying "Many women have done valiantly  
But you excelled them all."

MR. JULIUS KUSHNER

RABBI and MRS. HAROLD KUSHNER  
and Family

RABBI and MRS. PAUL KUSHNER  
and Family



IN FOND REMEMBRANCE ON THE  
HIGH HOLY DAYS

JUDGE JOSEPH A. SOLOVEI

DR. SAMUEL SOLOVEI

and Loving Parents,

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